

**Prepared Testimony of the City of New Haven**  
**Respectfully submitted to the Transportation Committee**



City of New Haven  
Toni N. Harp  
Mayor

**RE: HB 5931: An Act Concerning Tax Relief Zones Around Airports**

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera, and members of the Committee, my name is Stephen Fontana and I am writing on behalf of Mayor Toni N. Harp concerning HB #5931 and the establishment of tax relief zones around airports.

Tweed-New Haven Regional Airport ("Tweed") is owned by the City of New Haven and leased to a 15-member Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority (the "Authority"), established by state law in 1997. Tweed is one of just two Federal Aviation Administration-certified Class I airports in Connecticut, together with Bradley Airport. In 2013, there were 31,631 commercial and general aviation movements at Tweed.

Commercial passenger volume, however, is just a fraction of the total number of air travelers in greater New Haven. While US Airways provides modest service to its major hub at Philadelphia, an estimated 47% of the regional New Haven market uses out-of-state airports. Tweed service is closely tied to attraction of future investment in technologies developed at Yale University and Yale-New Haven Hospital. Reliable local air service is known to facilitate the recruitment and retention of world-class talent to the university and medical research businesses. With these core business needs in mind, the need for more robust service is clear and the Authority is aggressively seeking airline service to additional hubs.

Tweed is situated on 396 acres in New Haven and East Haven and in close proximity to residential neighborhoods in both communities. Historically, Tweed's location has led to a number of controversies between the municipalities of New Haven and East Haven, including a legal dispute about the implementation of runway safety areas. As part of a broader effort to enable construction of runway safety areas, resolve flooding issues, and improve community relations, a 2009 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed by the City of New Haven, the Town of East Haven, the Authority, and five members of the General Assembly.

The MOA put to rest many disputed issues and Tweed has pursued a number of important "good neighbor" programs. These include a noise attenuation program to address the homes most impacted by aircraft noise; traffic calming measures; and improved communications through a new community advisory board.

Due to a number of economic factors in the airline industry, new commercial service still has not materialized. While recruitment efforts continue, it is vitally important to further our good neighbor efforts so that Tweed is well-positioned for future growth. The City is mindful of the various impacts that come with living near major transportation facilities, and encourages the State of Connecticut to take the next step by facilitating an appropriate level of relief for these impacted residents.

Respectfully submitted to the Transportation Committee, February 11, 2015.

CITY OF NEW HAVEN

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Fontana', written over a horizontal line.

Stephen Fontana  
Office of Economic Development